



4 FOOD PACKAGE/DRAFT ISSUANCE

Effective: 3/1/98

4.45 WIC Benefits During a Disaster

Issued: 1/15/98

POLICY: To the extent possible, WIC projects should continue to provide benefits to participants in a valid certification period during disasters.

BACKGROUND: Among USDA food assistance programs, the Food Stamp Program and the commodity programs are the primary food assistance resources to meet the immediate needs of disaster victims. In contrast, WIC is a limited grant supplemental nutrition program that serves a specific population with special nutritional needs. It is not designed or funded to meet the basic nutritional needs of disaster victims who would not otherwise be eligible for the Program.

PROCEDURE:

A. NON-PARTICIPANTS

WIC benefits, including WIC infant formula samples, may not be provided to non-WIC participants.

B. REPLACING FOODS

(drafts have been redeemed)

1. WIC funds cannot be used to replace WIC participants' foods that were lost in a mass disaster, since emergency feeding services are typically provided. Mass disasters are natural disasters affecting many households, such as flood, large area evacuations, or tornados. Families should be referred to emergency community food resources.
2. WIC foods that were destroyed or made inaccessible due to isolated personal misfortune may be replaced with WIC drafts. See Policy 4.37 Replacement Drafts. Isolated personal misfortunes are disasters where one or a few households might be affected by some destructive incident such as a gas line explosion, water main break, or house fire.
 - a) Prior to replacing the lost food with drafts, the local project shall require that the destruction be verified by the fire department or Red Cross, a home visit or other community source (newspaper, radio).
 - b) Foods should be replaced for the actual amount of the loss, but not exceeding the full food package.



- c) The quantity replaced should be based on the portion of food benefits for which the participant would normally still be eligible (i.e., from the present to the remaining days of the issuance month). Benefits may not be retroactive.
- d) Participants must sign a statement attesting to the fact that their WIC foods were destroyed as a result of the disaster.

C. REPLACING DRAFTS

- 1. Drafts that were not redeemed and were destroyed or made inaccessible due to personal misfortune, may be replaced with an equal amount of food benefits. See Policy 4.37, Replacement Drafts and System Manual, Section 4, Replacement Drafts.
- 2. Assess which drafts were used by interviewing the participant or proxy. This should be verified with the ADP contractor.
- 3. Participants must sign a statement attesting to the fact that their drafts were destroyed as a result of the disaster.
- 4. Also replace ID folder and other materials needed, i.e. pictorial guide, translated materials, etc..

D. MAILING DRAFTS

Replacement or regular drafts should be mailed if it is a hardship for the family to come to the WIC clinic. See Policy 4.36 Mailing Drafts and System Manual, Section 4, Mailing Drafts.

E. MAKE APPROPRIATE FOOD PACKAGE CHANGES

- 1. Food package adjustments should be made to accommodate disaster conditions such as loss of refrigeration or unsafe drinking water.
 - a) RTF formula may be issued if the public health staff or Department of Natural Resources has determined the water to be unsafe.
 - b) Assess the need for temporary “portability” or homeless packages (see Food Package Selection Chart).